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ABSTRACT

The goal of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 was that all schools would be successful as measured by the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). The Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program was created to promote the goal. The program sought to create a pool of distinguished educators who would serve in School Transformation and Assistance and Renewal (STAR) schools. The distinguished educator's role was to coordinate efforts to transform STAR schools and to create guidance and support for the school change process. This publication presents findings of a study that examined the effectiveness of the distinguished educator program. Data were gathered through surveys of: (1) teachers who served as component managers in STAR schools; (2) principals who served in STAR schools; (3) superintendents who had STAR schools in their districts; and (4) all distinguished educators who served in STAR schools. Preliminary findings showed that the respondents (80 percent) rated the distinguished educator program as either highly effective or effective. Moreover, the majority of respondents viewed the distinguished educator program as contributing to faculty unity and overall school improvement. The program's greatest strength was that the distinguished educators gained credibility among those in the schools because they were "insiders" who had worked for many years in the Kentucky public school system. However, they also had the benefit of working as "outsiders" who had few preconceptions about the school and who could offer specialized training in solving school problems. Appendices contain a sample of the survey and data on managers', principals', distinguished educators', and superintendents' perceptions. (Contains 34 references.) (LMI)

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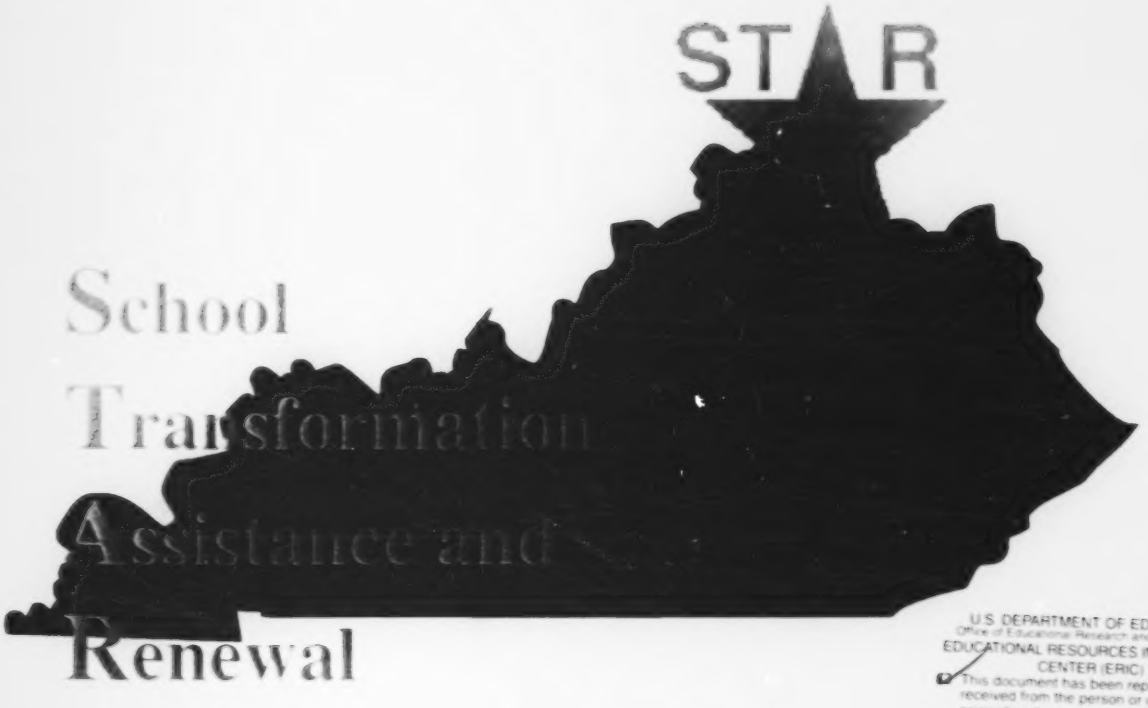
A Preliminary Analysis of the Kentucky Distinguished Educator Initiative: A New Approach to Educational Change



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February, 1997

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Table of Contents

Project Overview	2
Preliminary Analysis	3
Historical Overview	4
Review of Related Educational Literature	15
Method	20
Results	24
Discussion	44
References	57
Appendix A: Sample Survey	62
Appendix B: Percentages of Component Managers' Perceptions	72
Appendix C: Percentages of Principals' Perceptions	74
Appendix D: Percentages of Distinguished Educators' Perceptions	76
Appendix E: Percentages of Superintendents' Perceptions	78

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Project Overview

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Project Overview

The goal of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) of 1990 was for all schools to be successful as measured by the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). In order to promote this goal, the Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program was created. The overall purpose of the program was to create a pool of distinguished educators, those who represented the state's outstanding and highly skilled professionals, who then served in School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) schools.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the effectiveness of the distinguished educator program. Surveys were developed and sent to those who were directly involved in the program: (a) teachers who served as component managers in STAR schools, (b) principals who served in STAR schools, (c) superintendents who had STAR schools in their districts, and (d) all distinguished educators who served in STAR schools. The surveys, which were comprised of a series of closed-ended and open-ended questions, were analyzed by independent educational researchers. The preliminary analysis of the closed-ended questions showed that, for the most part, the respondents (80%) rated the distinguished educator program as being either highly effective or effective. The analysis of the open-ended questions supported the closed-ended responses.

The results demonstrated that the majority of those surveyed viewed the distinguished educator program as making a needed and important contribution to faculty unity and overall school improvement. One of the greatest strengths of the program is that the distinguished educators gain credibility among those in the schools because they are "insiders" who have worked for many years in the Kentucky public school system. However, they also have the benefit of working as "outsiders" who have few preconceptions about the school and who can offer specialized training and expertise when it comes to solving school problems.

Preliminary Analysis

A Preliminary Analysis of the Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program: A New Approach to Educational Change

In the 1990 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, the state legislature enacted the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), the nation's most comprehensive and aggressive educational reform initiative. A specific provision (KRS 158.782) was included within the comprehensive legislation for the development of the Kentucky Distinguished Educators Program. The overall purpose of the program was to create a pool of distinguished educators drawn from the state's outstanding and highly skilled educational professionals. They would advise schools in need of help and assist the Kentucky Department of Education with its research projects.

Upon selection, the majority of distinguished educators accept assignments to assist schools identified as "in decline." These schools' assessment accountability indices, as measured by the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS), have fallen below their baseline score or fail to reach their original improvement goal for two consecutive bienniums. (The baseline is the average of a school's previous two-year performance period.) A distinguished educator assigned to a school "in decline," assists with the improvement of student academic performance and helps the school meet its KIRIS improvement goal.

Historical Overview

Historical Overview of the Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program

Fall 1989-April 1990

During the late 1980's, the Kentucky Legislature worked diligently to develop a strategic approach to improve the state's educational system. One component of the reform efforts was the professional development of school personnel so that they can best meet the educational needs of the children they teach. After much discussion and planning by the curriculum committee of the legislature and its educational consultant, the Kentucky Distinguished Educator Program was initiated as KRS. 158.782. This program was part of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), which was passed and signed into law by then-Governor Wallace Wilkinson on April 11, 1990.

1991-1992 Academic Year

After the signing of the legislation, an advisory committee was formed. It was responsible for making plans and decisions regarding budgetary issues, discussing the possibility of university collaboration, and establishing the criteria for selection as a distinguished educator. The Commissioner of Education then issued the first call for applications. Approximately 125 people applied.

1992-1993 Academic Year

During the application process, the position of Distinguished Educator Program Consultant (an employee of the Kentucky Department of Education) was created. One of the consultant's responsibilities was to assist in the selection process. The staff from the Division of School Improvement of the Kentucky Department of Education and educators from across the state, directed the selection of the first distinguished educators. They evaluated the applicants as they participated in activities that included: (a) a critique of a classroom interaction video; (b) the presentation of a professional portfolio; (c) a panel interview; (d) the preparation of a writing sample; (e) an activity designed to determine a candidate's leadership ability.

Ten finalists were invited to participate in an interview with the staff of the Division of School Improvement and three other educators. After considering the recommendations, the Commissioner named seven distinguished educators. The initial seven began a one-year sabbatical from their respective school districts to serve as teaching ambassadors who traveled throughout Kentucky and promoted good teaching practices. They also assisted the Kentucky Department of Education on its research projects and staff development efforts. They adopted a mission statement to define their goals: "To create a trusting and collaborative environment in which educators are willing to risk the change necessary to achieve and sustain the highest levels of student performance."

Soon after the start of the sabbatical year for the distinguished educators, the Commissioner issued a call for others to apply for positions as distinguished educators. Two hundred-fifty educators from around the state chose to apply. After an initial screening, 106 applicants were chosen to participate in the next phase, of the selection process. People from outside of the program conducted this phase which included: (a) the presentation of a writing sample; (b) a critique of a classroom interaction video; (c) a portfolio presentation; (d) the creation of a school improvement plan; (e) an activity that focused on leadership skills.

Fifty-eight candidates progressed to the final phase. It consisted of site visits to each candidate's place of employment, where interviews were held with professional colleagues (e.g., principals, teachers, and parents). In April of 1993, using information gathered from the site visits and the geographic distribution of the candidates, the panel in charge of the selection process recommended 45 persons to be named as distinguished educators. Three persons were asked to serve as alternates.

In June 1993, the training program for the distinguished educators from the first and second rounds of the selection process began. Training was delivered in a collaborative effort by the University of Louisville, the Gheens Academy for Professional Development from the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the Division of School Improvement. The training consisted of six strands: (a) understanding the role of the change agent; (b) establishing procedures for

measuring results; (c) aligning of curriculum/instruction; (d) investigating the real world of schools; (e) renewing the community covenant; (f) developing personnel.

Additionally, there were components of the training mandated by the legislature. These included: (a) education on Kentucky's Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS--the state school assessment program); (b) school budget planning; (c) curriculum and instruction development; (d) personnel evaluation; (e) leadership skill development.

1993-1994 Academic Year

Two one-week training sessions in the summer and monthly weekend sessions during the 1993-1994 school year were held at various sites around the state. Subsequently, the 1994 Annual Report by the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) noted that formal, written evaluations for each training session were lacking and recommended that the evaluation results be included and used for future session planning. The report also cited a strong sense of camaraderie, which had developed during the formal training.

The Commissioner of Education named a group of six distinguished educators from the pool to begin a one-year sabbatical with the Kentucky Department of Education at the beginning of the 1993-1994 school year. These educators served as teaching ambassadors and assisted the Department with its research projects and staff development. The remainder of the group came to be

known as the "consultant pool," from which future distinguished educators would be selected for assignment.

The program continued to evolve in the spring of 1994, when the selection process was altered. For instance, it was decided that site visits would no longer be a part of the process, but would be replaced with telephone interviews with colleagues of the candidates. After the revision of the selection process, the Commissioner issued a call for a third round of selecting distinguished educators. Ninety-five applications were received. Seventeen distinguished educators were selected from the applicant pool. At this time, the total number of distinguished educators had grown to 67, plus three alternates.

1994-1995 Academic Year

In the 1994-1995 school year, the Division of School Improvement of the Kentucky Department of Education began selecting distinguished educators to serve in schools identified as "in decline." The selection process included: (a) the development of individual growth plans by each distinguished educator; (b) a review of each distinguished educator's competency with school transformation planning; (c) the development of a Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) instructional unit by each distinguished educator; (d) the completion of the Kentucky Academy for School Executives (KASE) written assessment tool for superintendents; (e) completion of the National Association of Secondary School

Principals (NASSP) assessment tool. At the completion of the selection process in July 1994, 22 distinguished educators were assigned to schools "in decline." The distinguished educators that remained continued as members of the consultant pool. As consultants, the unassigned distinguished educators worked to promote KERA and assisted school districts when needed.

At the same time, the Kentucky Department of Education adopted the School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) project, for assisting schools "in decline." STAR provides a framework of procedures aimed at increasing student achievement. STAR, implemented by schools "in decline" in consultation with distinguished educators, placed fiscal (Commonwealth School Improvement Funds) and human resources (distinguished educators) in schools where the KIRIS results indicated that student performance had fallen below the school's accountability baseline scores. STAR defines the process by which distinguished educators deal with their individual schools, yet allows variation in methods used to approach areas of concern. Seven strategies make up the STAR program: (a) a focus on results; (b) a school transformation plan; (c) capacity building; (d) an external review process; (e) principal leadership development; (f) district transformation plan; (g) phased implementation for funding.

Since STAR's initial implementation, the actual number of schools that have participated in the project has varied. In August 1994, 150 schools volunteered to participate, based on their previous year's achievement data.

Fifteen more schools joined the project in November 1994, following the first preliminary release of the 1995 data. After the final KIRIS results were available in February 1995, 53 schools were required to participate; those schools no longer eligible withdrew.

Supplemental funding is made available to STAR schools in an effort to foster their improvement by providing fiscal resources for educational support. In an effort to appropriate the funding in an equitable manner, the Educational Improvement Advisory Committee (EIAC) was created. The EIAC members, who are appointed by the governor, oversee the granting of moneys from the Commonwealth School Improvement Funds (CSIF). The School Transformation Plan (STP) format is used to apply for CSIF, and the activities must be approved by the EIAC before funding can be given. In some instances, the EIAC members make recommendations to the school planning team for strengthening the STP.

Three distinct phases of the STAR project of funding were identified. In phase one, schools that volunteered to participate as a STAR school received a $2,000 planning grant to cover the cost of training and developing the STP. The plan was developed from KIRIS results data, and a comprehensive needs assessment that included the Effective Schools Survey (a research-based instrument that surveys parents, school staff, and students concerning perceptions that focus on characteristics of effective schools). The STP development process also identified possible causes of school decline.

Based on this information, goals were set and activities focusing on goal achievement. In phases two and three, each STAR school received money from CSIF, based on the student population, to support the implementation of the STP activities. The schools also received $1,500 each to develop and implement short-term strategies/activities to foster student performance on the 1994-1995 school assessment measures. In addition, supplemental funding was accessible on an "as needed" basis.

When there were 165 schools participating, each assigned distinguished educator assisted seven to nine schools with school transformation planning. Three of the distinguished educators, who served as team leaders, served only four schools. This required rigorous work loads and hours of travel time. As a result of their commitment, the distinguished educators saw a need to develop and implement additional systemic processes that fostered the success of the STAR project. These processes included: (a) School-Based Curriculum Development (SBCD); (b) the STAR External Review Visit (SERV); (c) the STAR School Self-Study (SSS); (d) STAR Component Lead Process/Training; (e) STAR Principal Professional Development; (f) Vital Signs Reports.

1995-1996 Academic Year

The Commissioner issued another call for distinguished educator applicants during the first part of 1995. The distinguished educator program continued to evolve. For example, the selection process was changed from "select, train, assess, and place" to "select, assess, commit to be placed and train." Prior to the change, distinguished educators who were not placed after they had gone through training often felt frustrated. They had invested time and effort into the training process and then suffered disappointment when they were not assigned to a school. Additionally, it was more cost effective to train only those distinguished educators who would definitely be placed in School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) schools. Therefore, the change was made so that the distinguished educators would be trained after they were committed to an assignment, rather than before.

The assessment phase of the selection process, called the Distinguished Educator Assessment Process (DEAP), was created by the distinguished educators to identify individuals who are creative, problem solvers, consensus builders, effective communicators (oral and written) and highly motivated to improve schools. DEAP activities focused on responding to writing prompts, an analysis of the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS) data, leaderless group activities, facilitation responsibilities, and oral presentations.

The applicants were also required to complete the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NAASP) assessment tool. After a review of the applicants' performance and telephone interviews with colleagues, 17 distinguished educators were named. Thirteen were assigned to schools in the 1995-1996 school year. Each time a new group of distinguished educators was selected, some were assigned to schools; others accepted different responsibilities and remained in the consultant pool.

From the consultant pool of distinguished educators, five were placed on sabbatical to work with the Kentucky Department of Education in a variety of capacities; the others continued to work in their school districts. Throughout the summer and the 1995-1996 school year, the distinguished educators continued to work on the development of special projects, such as the School Based Curriculum Development model. Other distinguished educators were involved in the training of elementary resource teachers. The need for this training had evolved during the 1994-1995 school year and it was implemented in 1995-1996. Several distinguished educators conducted professional development programs for school staff on topics such as the writing process, cooperative learning strategies, instructional unit design, and interdisciplinary planning.

Forty-six distinguished educators participated in a required two-week summer training institute prior to the school year. The training focused on the legislated components and the work responsibilities in STAR schools. A high

school restructuring workshop was also conducted for distinguished educators who were assigned to schools at that level.

While the original design of the distinguished educator program remains, some revisions have been made in order to better serve STAR schools. This historical description demonstrates that the program has continued to evolve in order to be effective. The complex role of the distinguished educator mirrors the complexity of what is required to transform a school's environment to one that fosters high levels of student achievement as well as teacher efficacy. The charge of the distinguished educator is to coordinate the challenges of transforming STAR schools.

Review of Related Educational Literature

Review of Related Educational Literature

The goal of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) was for all schools to be successful as measured by the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). In order to promote this goal, the distinguished educator program was developed to provide assistance to schools that experienced difficulty achieving an identified level of success. The distinguished educator's primary role is to assist in the development of a supportive and collaborative culture centered on overall school improvement. This is achieved by the distinguished educator coordinating the seven School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) strategies: (a) a focus on results; (b) a school transformation plan; (c) an external review process; (d) capacity building; (e) principal leadership development; (f) the district transformation plan; (g) phased implementation of funding.

At its core, the distinguished educator program seeks to enable teachers, administrators, and other school personnel to improve the circumstances of their schools. Recent research (Brown, 1994; Johnson & Ginsberg, 1996) emphasizes not only the value of specific reforms but also the means by which they are implemented. The distinguished educator initiative exemplifies an effective program for implementation of change strategies. Rather than taking on the role of a regulator or watchdog, the distinguished educator serves as a facilitator of the educational reform initiatives (McDonald, 1996a; McGown,1995).

By creating an enabling atmosphere, the distinguished educator is innovative and creative, directly influences student outcomes, has opportunities for feedback, recognition and support, and has a chance to share ideas with other teaching professionals (Davis & McDonald, 1996; Newton, 1996). Bass (1985) argued that in an empowering school culture, school personnel perform beyond expectations because they believe in what they are doing, are aware of its importance and value, and find meaning and significance in what they do. Other educational researchers have supported the development of this type of school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Joyce, Wolf & Calhoun, 1993; Little, 1990; Louis & Miles, 1990; Maeroff, 1988; Schmoker, 1996; Sergiovanni, 1996; Shulman, 1989; Thurston, Clift & Schacht, 1993).

One of the primary functions of the distinguished educator is to support and initiate improvements in classroom instruction. If educational reforms fail to influence instruction and promote higher levels of student learning, they can hardly be considered reforms. Effective school reforms influence what teachers and students do on a continuous basis (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Sergiovanni & Moore, 1989). Underlying this reasoning is the premise that effective teaching leads to quality schooling. Lanier and Sedlak (1989) stated that "Teacher efficacy--the empowering knowledge and opportunity for participation in the reconstruction of schools--is the means of transforming learning from task-completion to understanding, from ritualized hoop-jumping to acquiring meaning

and social value" (p. 118). Astuto (1994) supports this statement by arguing that efforts at reform must go beyond a superficial search for routine solutions. He maintains that support from beyond the school and purposeful analysis of school needs is required. The distinguished educator facilitates a creative analysis and search for solutions.

Fullan (1991) contends that in order to have an in-depth look at school needs, the school culture must change to one with constant interaction focused on professional and student-centered issues. This is an important point because teachers, principals, other school personnel, and parents are the ones who are directly involved in any school's educational reform efforts (Fraatz, 1988; Sizer 1992). For it to be effective, however, others (e.g., administrators outside the school and educators from the state government level) in the larger organizational structure must offer support and guidance throughout the change process for it to be effective (Passow, 1989; Peters, 1987; Quimby, 1985; Senge, 1990).

The distinguished educator is responsible for promoting cooperation among the diverse entities involved in school reform. At STAR schools, the distinguished educator assists with incorporating research-based practices to identify solutions to problems with student learning. Sergiovanni (1989a) views school improvement as resulting from attention to "strategies, directives, hopes, and visions that can bring about a shared commitment and common direction" (p. 6). By the creation of a set of shared goals, those involved in the reform process

develop a sense of responsibility for their achievement (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993; McDonald, 1996b; Sergiovanni, 1989b).

Perhaps the most significant result of the reform was to cause educators, as well as the public, to focus on student achievement as the measure of school success. Meaningful success with increasing student learning does not happen quickly. The process involves recognition of the problem and the appropriateness of the solution. It is the responsibility of the change agent to facilitate this action. According to Evans (1996), the change agents must "help them (staff) move from loss to commitment, from old competence to new competence, from confusion to coherence, and from conflict to consensus" (p. 55). The distinguished educator's responsibility is to assist school staff in an analysis of data that identifies a school's weaknesses as well as its strengths. As a team, the distinguished educator and school staff develop appropriate solutions in the form of a school transformation plan.

The School Transformation Plan (STP) focuses on the concept of time and its use. How the change agents (distinguished educators) and STAR educators spend their time is critical to school improvement. The distinguished educators, in collaboration with school personnel, must allow time to develop and implement "tools" that foster the school transformation process. An analysis of STAR school educators revealed that the needs of their schools should drive the effective use of time (Williamson, Sinor, & Pettit, 1996).

While a considerable amount of educational research has focused on the effectiveness of change agents in schools no investigation to date has examined the effectiveness of the Kentucky Distinguished Educator program.

The purpose of this study is to describe and ascertain the effectiveness of the distinguished educator program and place this research within the context of other research examining school reform initiatives.

Method

Method

The Development of the Survey Instruments

This distinguished educator study is based on survey instruments (see Appendix A for a sample survey) that focus on determining the effectiveness of the distinguished educator/School Transformation Assistance and Renewal program. The surveys, written by independent educational researchers outside the Kentucky Department of Education, are comprised of a series of closed and open-ended questions. The researchers focused on the creation of questions that would reflect the respondents' views concerning the distinguished educator/STAR program.

The closed questions asked the respondents to rate the effectiveness of the program. The respondents rated the distinguished educator/STAR program on a scale ranging from highly effective to negative effect or not relevant. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for the respondents to state their opinions and offer suggestions concerning the effectiveness of the distinguished educator/STAR program. These questions provided a way for the researchers to examine in greater depth the ideas of the respondents and gain greater insight into the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the distinguished educator/STAR program.

Focus Group

A focus group, composed of distinguished educators and other people involved in the STAR project, examined the survey before it was administered. They offered many suggestions that improved the clarity of the questions that were asked.

Participants

Component Managers. Each School Transformation Plan (STP) was organized around components (e.g., math, science, English, etc.). Three to nine parents and teachers worked on each component. The component manager, a teacher, chaired the component meetings. Surveys were sent to 106 teachers who served as component managers in STAR schools that had been assigned a distinguished educator. Responses were received from 40 component managers. This was a 38 percent return rate. Of those who responded, 12 were male and 28 were female. Their average age was 42 years, and they had been teaching for an average of 14.8 years.

Principals. Surveys were sent to 54 principals who served in schools that had been assigned a distinguished educator. Responses were received from 30 principals. This was a 72 percent return rate. One respondent refused to provide any demographic information. Based on the data from the 29 who remained, 21 were male and 8 were female. Their average age was 47 years, and they had served as a principal for an average of 6 years.

Superintendents. Surveys were sent to 44 superintendents who had a school that was served by a distinguished educator. Responses were received from 29 of the superintendents. This was a 65 percent return rate. One respondent refused to answer the survey and wrote a comment that reflected his opposition to the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). Based on the data from the 28 who remained, 27 were male and one was female. Their average age was 50.6 years, and they had served as a superintendent for an average of 8 years.

Distinguished Educators. Surveys were sent to 46 distinguished educators who served in STAR schools. Responses were received from all of them. Nineteen of the distinguished educators were male and 17 were female. Immediately prior to serving as a distinguished educator, 21 had been teachers and 25 had been administrators. Their average age was 50 years; they had spent an average of 15 years teaching and 6 years serving in an administrative position.

Procedure

The surveys were mailed to the component managers, principals, superintendents, and distinguished educators. Each survey was accompanied by a cover letter from an Associate Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Education, asking for cooperation with the research study. A second letter from the researchers described measures that would be used to maintain the confidentiality of the respondents. The researchers also emphasized that the respondents should be candid about both the strengths as well as the weaknesses

of the distinguished educator/STAR program. A stamped envelope was provided, and the respondents mailed the surveys to a university address of one of the researchers. No information was shared with the Kentucky Department of Education until all personal identification was removed.

Data Analysis

Surveys consisted of both closed and open-ended questions. For the closed questions portion of the surveys, frequency distributions were calculated for each question and then converted to percentages. For the open-ended questions, responses were analyzed for emerging patterns.

Results

Results

The following discussion of the results focuses on the responses to the surveys administered to component managers, principals, distinguished educators and the superintendents. The responses are discussed first in terms of the quantitative measures and then in terms of the open-ended questions.

Component Managers

Surveys were sent to 106 teachers who served as component managers in School Transformation and Renewal Schools (STAR) that had been assigned a distinguished educator. The results (see Appendix B) are limited, because only 40 component managers chose to respond to the survey. For this discussion, the results have been divided into four general categories.

Category 1: The effectiveness of the distinguished educator program. Eighty-seven percent of the component managers rated the distinguished educators as highly effective or effective in terms of the distinguished educators' overall performance. The component managers also felt that the distinguished educators communicated their roles well in the schools and fostered a good attitude towards the STAR program.

Eighty-six percent of the teachers felt that the distinguished educators were highly effective or effective in working with the school staff in the development of the School Transformation Plan (STP), and 93% felt that the

distinguished educators had been very important in the subsequent implementation of the STP.

The component managers perceived that a large majority of the distinguished educators have done a good job in getting cooperation from the staff in the preparation of the monthly Vital Signs Reports. (A Vital Signs Report is a systematic way of continuously revisiting the STP and evaluating its progress and need for possible revision.) Seventy-seven percent of these respondents felt that the distinguished educators had been highly effective or effective in fostering the leadership role of the component manager. They also felt that the distinguished educators fostered the principals' leadership position.

Category 2: The effectiveness of the STAR program tools. According to the component managers, the distinguished educator appears to be the most effective instrument that the STAR schools receive from the Kentucky Department of Education. The various tools that the distinguished educator assists the schools in using were also seen as generally effective. The teachers were convinced that the STP helps establish measurable goals for the school, but some were less sure that the STP had improved teaching and learning (23% responded somewhat effective). Sixty-two percent of the teachers felt that KERA Strand Analysis (an analysis of the "linkage" between KERA strands and the improvement of student performance) was highly effective to effective in the development of school improvement strategies.

The least positive response focused on the Effective School Survey (a research-based instrument that surveys parents, school staff, and students concerning perceptions that focus on characteristics of effective schools). Fifty-three percent rated this tool as highly effective to effective, 43% rated it somewhat effective or as having a neutral effect. Teachers were also asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the monthly component managers meetings. Sixty-three percent of the teachers found them to be a successful tool.

There were also "tools" that were seen as generally very effective by teachers. These included: (a) the Vital Signs Report; (b) the District Support Plan; (c) the Commonwealth School Improvement Funds (CSIF); (d) School-Based Curriculum Development; (e) SERV External Review; (f) the School Transformation Plan.

Category 3: Effectiveness of community and parent involvement. One of the major goals of the STAR program is the involvement of parents and the community in the schools. The component managers who responded felt that the program was least successful in this area. Fifty percent viewed the STP as highly effective or effective at fostering community involvement. The other 50% of the component managers gave a somewhat effective or neutral rating in terms of involving parents and the community.

Category 4: Qualitative data results. At the conclusion of the survey, the respondents had the opportunity to answer open-ended questions. In their

responses, the component managers reiterated a general belief that the distinguished educators were helpful in their schools. One of the interesting results of the data analysis was that a strong emphasis was placed on the positive effect that the distinguished educator had in creating a united "team" of professionals--teachers and administrators working together to improve the school. The distinguished educator had done this by improving communication, promoting a shared vision, and being an impartial mediator who helped to resolve conflicts. One teacher described the positive change in his/her school by stating, "I think the distinguished educator has done an excellent job of helping us to unite as one team (school-wide). The distinguished educator acted somewhat as a mediator between the administration and the staff, diffusing sometimes explosive situations."

The role of the distinguished educator also helped teachers find and use appropriate teaching/learning resources. The following quotation from a teacher supports this conclusion.

> I no longer feel isolated in my teaching situation. Our distinguished educator and the STAR resources have allowed me to network with other teachers in the state and nation. Sharing ideas and activities has given me a renewed enthusiasm. I am now connected with more resources which can directly benefit my students.

The final question of the survey asked the component managers to describe an aspect of the distinguished educator program that they would most

like to see changed. Almost half argued that they wanted the distinguished educator to spend even more time in their schools. Many complained that the distinguished educators were required to attend too many meetings and had too much paperwork.

It seems that the component managers in this survey felt that the distinguished educator was central to the effectiveness of bringing about change in their schools. They wanted the distinguished educator to be there to help as much as possible; the few distinguished educators who received negative comments for their work were the ones who were faulted for not spending enough time working with people in the schools.

The data from the component managers' surveys, although it is limited due to the low response rate, seems to support the premise that the distinguished educators are a valuable asset to the majority of schools trying to improve their educational programs. A component manager summed it up:

> Our distinguished educator has done a great job. He/she is the first person to come to our school that has been able to explain KERA and make sense of any of it. The distinguished educator has encouraged open and honest discussion. I have learned to be a better teacher because of this...Our distinguished educator is the most positive thing KERA has produced.

Principals

A similar survey was sent to 54 principals who serve at schools that had been assigned a distinguished educator. Thirty principals responded to the survey.

Like the component managers report, the discussion of the results (see Appendix C) is divided into four general categories.

Category 1: The effectiveness of the distinguished educator. Eighty-three percent of the principals rated the distinguished educators as being highly effective to effective in terms of their overall job performance. They also felt that distinguished educators communicated their roles effectively and fostered a positive attitude towards the School Transformation Assistance and Renewal program. The principals agreed with the component managers that the distinguished educators worked well with school staffs in the development of the School Transformation Plan (STP) and its subsequent implementation. The distinguished educators, according to the principals, appear to have done a good job of getting cooperation from the staff in the preparation of the monthly Vital Signs Reports. Additionally, 73% of the principals felt that the distinguished educators had been highly effective to effective in encouraging the principals' leadership position.

Category 2: The effectiveness of the STAR program tools. While the distinguished educator seems to be the most effective instrument the school received from the Kentucky Department of Education, the principals also supported the effectiveness of other STAR program components. For example, principals were convinced that the STP helped to establish measurable goals for the schools; however, some were unsure whether the STP promoted the

improvement of teaching and learning (31% stated this aspect as somewhat effective). Other components perceived as being effective by the principals were the Vital Signs Reports, the District Support Plan, and the Commonwealth School Improvement Funds.

Although some components of STAR were viewed as effective, others were not. For instance, the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) Strand Analysis was seen by some as being less helpful (45% rated it as somewhat effective). Similarly, 28% of the principals found the Kentucky Instructional Results and Information System (KIRIS) results only somewhat effective in the development of school improvement strategies. The Effective Schools Survey received a similar response.

The least positive response to a question was received when the principals, evaluation of the effectiveness of monthly component managers meetings. Specifically, 31% rated that these meetings somewhat effective or having a neutral effect. This response may reflect a general negative attitude to meetings that draw personnel away from the classroom.

Category 3: The effectiveness of community involvement. One of the major goals of the STAR program has been to involve parents and community in schools. The principals who responded to the surveys felt the program was least successful in this area. The majority of principals felt that the distinguished

educators and STP were only somewhat effective or had no effect in involving parents and the community in their respective schools.

Category 4: Qualitative data results. At the conclusion of the survey, the principals responded to two open-ended questions. The first question asked what the principals valued most about the distinguished educators' work; the second asked what they would like to change in terms of the role of the distinguished educator.

The principals' responses reiterated their general belief that the distinguished educators were helpful in the STAR schools. Overall, the principals found the distinguished educators to be committed, courageous, positive, and knowledgeable. One principal spoke of the distinguished educator as someone who helped create a school building "full of leaders."

In response to the question that focused on suggestions for change in the distinguished educator program, an overwhelming number of principals appeared to support a view articulated by one of their peers:

> I would like the distinguished educator to spend total time in our building. Same work hours as regular staff. Ideally, we really don't want to share our DE with anyone. Throughout the first semester, our DE has been pulled away from our school too many days because of meetings in Frankfort or simply as a result of the requirement of working with another larger school. We miss the assistance when the distinguished educator is serving other schools.

Many principals also mentioned the heavy load of paperwork and required meetings as taking valuable time away from the school. Other principals added to this theme by complaining that the distinguished educator should stay with a school from year to year in order to reduce the confusion created by having to adapt to new distinguished educators.

Two principals felt that their respective school personnel had been intimidated by an overbearing distinguished educator. Additionally, although they respected the distinguished educators, two other principals thought that they could handle school improvement efforts without assistance from distinguished educators. Finally, one principal worried that the presence of a distinguished educator could unintentionally emphasize the "in decline" label. These issues may reflect a need for greater tact on the part of some distinguished educators.

The general tone of the principals' responses to the perception surveys reveals that they view the distinguished educator as someone who makes a needed and important contribution to faculty unity and overall school improvement. The principals would like the distinguished educators to spend more time in the schools and less time doing paperwork and attending meetings in locations around the state.

Distinguished Educators

Forty-six distinguished educators who serve in schools identified as "in decline" were given a corresponding survey to answer. All the distinguished

educators responded. The data were analyzed in the same categories used for the component managers and principals. A discussion of the results (see Appendix D) is divided into three general categories.

Category 1: The effectiveness of the distinguished educators. The distinguished educators were more reluctant than those with whom they work to evaluate their performance as highly effective. They most often chose a rating of effective when doing a self evaluation. For instance, 80% of the distinguished educators viewed themselves as effective to somewhat effective in the implementation of the School Transformation Plan (STP).

The distinguished educators rated themselves as highly effective (15%) to effective (48%) in terms of their ability to encourage principal leadership. They also rated themselves as highly effective (44%) to effective (31%) at fostering cooperation with school staff in the development of the Vital Signs Reports. Sixty-five percent of the distinguished educators rated themselves as highly effective to effective at fostering a positive attitude toward the School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) program, while 39% rated themselves as somewhat effective to having a neutral effect.

Category 2: The effectiveness of the STAR program tools. The distinguished educators perceived the STP as an important component of the STAR program. Eighty-five percent rated the STP as highly effective to effective at establishing measurable goals. In terms of the STP fostering the improvement

of teaching and learning, 55% of the distinguished educators saw it as highly effective to effective, while 46% viewed it as somewhat effective. Seventy-eight percent of the distinguished educators felt that the Kentucky Instructional Results Information system (KIRIS) results are useful in the development of school improvement strategies.

When asked about the effectiveness of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA) strand analysis, 41% rated it as highly effective to effective, and 28% rated it as somewhat effective. Over half of the distinguished educators rated the Effective School Survey as highly effective to effective. A majority (79%) of the distinguished educators rated the component managers meetings as effective to somewhat effective. Only a small number rated these meetings as highly effective (9%). Finally, most felt that the money received from CSIF was highly effective to effective (76%) in fostering student performance.

Category 3: The effectiveness of community involvement. The distinguished educators saw themselves as less effective in engaging parents and community in school change than they were in other aspects of their work. Only 31% of the distinguished educators rated themselves as highly effective to effective in engaging parents and community. A larger portion (69%) rated themselves as somewhat effective or having a negative effect. Their evaluation agrees with the principals and component managers. A possible reason for this may be that parent and community issues are not adequately integrated into the

STP. Fifty-eight percent of the distinguished educators said that the STP was only somewhat effective in involving parents and the community.

Category 4: Qualitative data results. The distinguished educators also had the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions. The distinguished educators were asked to list the most important curriculum changes they had initiated at their respective schools. The majority of the responses focused on how the distinguished educators assisted school staff in becoming active participants in the school-based curriculum development process (SBCD) as schools worked to meet KERA goals and expectations. For example, one distinguished educator stated that the SBCD process "empowered teachers to analyze and make decisions about school curriculum." Several distinguished educators placed an emphasis on the inclusion of "hands-on" activities, the use of manipulatives, activities that focused on writing across the curriculum, and the development of higher level thinking skills. Some mentioned that the curriculum development process at their school focused on meeting national standards as well as KERA goals and expectations.

The distinguished educators also gave examples of successful techniques they used with school staff. These included empowerment, counseling, coaching, and modeling techniques. To empower the staff, one distinguished educator encouraged the faculty to run their component manager and STP meetings. Another encouraged faculty to establish individual classroom goals. Several

distinguished educators mentioned that they used one-on-one conferences with teachers to discuss important issues and concerns. Distinguished educators also took on the role of a coach by conducting classroom observations, providing constructive feedback and encouragement to teachers. They also modeled ways to run an effective meeting with school principals and used the modeling technique to show teachers how to implement instructional strategies.

The distinguished educators were asked to describe the most rewarding aspect of their work. A large number of the distinguished educators found the opportunity to work with school staff the most rewarding part of their job. The following comment from a distinguished educator's survey supports this conclusion.

> The most rewarding part of the work is to see individual staff members begin to "turn around" and embrace more effective instructional strategies that engage students in active learning. When teachers experience success and a feeling that students are learning and enjoying the learning, it is rewarding for me to hear the enthusiasm in their voice.

Other distinguished educators found rewarding the opportunity to work with fellow distinguished educators. For example, one distinguished educator stated, "The opportunity to work with other distinguished educators to create tools that precipitate innovations that improve education for children is rewarding." Another distinguished educator stated that the rewarding aspect of the job was working with parents and the community. This is interesting, because most survey

respondents felt that the STAR program has been least effective in promoting a positive relationship between school and community.

Another question asked the distinguished educators to name the activity that had contributed the most to their professional growth. Many felt that participating in the development of a school-based curriculum contributed greatly to this professional development.

They also enjoyed the opportunity to work directly with school staff, students, parents, or other distinguished educators, and the opportunity to see educational reforms making a difference. As one distinguished educator stated, "All the experiences have helped me to have a broader picture of the entire educational process. I'm sure that I will return to the school district as a much better educator."

When asked to describe one aspect of their job they would like to see changed, a majority of the distinguished educators stated that they wanted to spend more time in the schools and less time attending meetings and doing paperwork. One thought that this could be accomplished through long-range planning that alleviated tight deadlines. Several also mentioned that they needed to have more power and authority to make the educational reform efforts work. The following controversial opinion is an example: "Distinguished educators need more authority to evaluate staff and release or dismiss those who are barriers to the STP implementation." Other distinguished educators felt that there needed

to be an effort to promote the distinguished educators program as a positive part of KERA. This would alleviate any misconceptions about the program and would make it easier for distinguished educators to communicate effectively upon assignment to schools "in decline."

The final question required the distinguished educators to state the areas in which they needed more training and support from the Kentucky Department of Education. The responses focused on four areas of concern: (a) school law and finance; (b) communicating better with school staff, especially those who are resistant to change; (c) being up-to-date on technological advances; (d) having more information on effective instructional practices. Many respondents felt that the Kentucky Department of Education was doing a good job in training that supported its distinguished educators and further assistance was not needed.

Superintendents

A shortened survey was sent to 44 superintendents in school districts that have a school that has been identified as "in decline." Twenty-nine superintendents chose to respond. One respondent refused to answer any questions and chose to write a response that reflected opposition to the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). The results (see Appendix E) are simply presented in quantitative and qualitative categories.

Quantitative results: The effectiveness of the distinguished educator and STAR programs.

Eighty-six percent of the superintendents viewed the distinguished educator as highly effective to effective. Over half (54%) saw the distinguished educators as highly effective to effective in helping school staff improve student performance. The superintendents overwhelmingly (79%) felt that they and the distinguished educators communicated effectively about the School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) program. Most thought that the distinguished educator had been highly effective to effective in the development of the District Transformation Plan (DTP). The DTP is a plan that focuses on how each individual school district targets resources to assist schools labeled "in decline."

The superintendents generally rated the STAR program as being effective. Of those surveyed, 75% rated the assistance that STAR provided as being highly effective to effective; 25% saw it as somewhat effective. Seventy-eight percent felt that the School Transformation Plan (STP) was highly effective to effective in helping staff to improve curriculum and instruction.

Qualitative data results. The effectiveness of the distinguished educator and STAR programs.

The final portion of the survey focused on getting specific information from the superintendents about the strengths and weaknesses of the distinguished educator and STAR programs. From the responses received, it appears that one of

the greatest strengths of the STAR program is the assistance provided by the distinguished educators. Specifically, the superintendents felt that the distinguished educators helped school personnel feel focused and goal oriented. The distinguished educator also was seen as a positive morale builder who helped school staff realize that "change can be a positive experience and that even good schools can get better."

In addition to the instructional support, the superintendents also appreciated the financial and practical support of the STAR program, for it allowed them to purchase or have access to needed resources that fostered school improvement. The general tone of the superintendents' responses suggests that they felt excited about having the opportunity to be creative as they sought to make meaningful change in schools. As one superintendent stated, "It has provided the staff with an opportunity to 'dream' about how it should be done, eliminate barriers, and implement the plan."

The superintendents also gave many thoughtful and candid suggestions for improving the distinguished educator and STAR programs. Recurring themes appeared during the analysis of their responses. For example, the superintendents emphasized the need for the distinguished educators to spend more time in the schools, and some thought that the distinguished educators should not be moved to different schools each year. The superintendents strongly felt that the component managers and the distinguished educators needed to spend less time

away from the classroom in meetings and training sessions. They also felt that the amount of paperwork that the distinguished educator had to complete was excessive.

Individual superintendents made more specific comments about the STAR and distinguished educator programs. In terms of the STAR program, some superintendents felt that schools should be provided with a larger funding package and that they should have more flexibility in how monies are spent. As for the distinguished educator program, some superintendents felt that: (a) the distinguished educator needed to be placed carefully in order to promote community acceptance; (b) any school that wanted a distinguished educator should be allowed to have one; (c) the distinguished educators needed more administrative experience. One superintendent thought that the STAR and distinguished educator program should continue in a school after its test scores improved.

In summary, the superintendents generally perceived that the distinguished educators helped teaching staff work together to set goals and then assisted them in goal attainment. They saw the distinguished educator as someone who fostered unity and helped school faculty to see that they could be a part of meaningful and exciting change that would lead to school improvement.

Summary of the Results

This study has evaluated four different surveys. Each of these surveys looks at the distinguished educator program from a different perspective. For example, superintendents have a different vantage point from which to view the distinguished educators than do component managers. The validity of the study is suggested by the results of the different surveys being in agreement. All four respondent groups agree that the distinguished educators are making a valuable contribution to school reform. The various surveys also agree that the one area where the distinguished educators are somewhat less effective is in their work with parents and the community. The results of the survey appear to be both valid and reliable. The results of all four surveys are consistent. A follow-up study has produced results consistent with the previous data.

Over 80% of the superintendents, principals, and teachers rated the distinguished educator program as either highly effective or effective. Many of these professionals also affirmed that the distinguished educators were helpful in developing and implementing the School Transformation Plans (STP) that provide the blueprint for change in the School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) program. They were also important in assisting in the preparation of the monthly Vital Signs Reports used to measure progress. The distinguished educator was seen as being effective at encouraging the leadership roles of

teachers and administrators. The teachers also noted that they felt supported and inspired to consider new instructional ideas and improve their teaching. The one area in which principals, teachers and especially the distinguished educators saw the greatest need for improvement was using the distinguished educator and STAR program to engage parents and the community.

In addition, the qualitative results revealed that the distinguished educator was seen as very helpful in the development of teams of professionals within each school. They also were important in the development of a shared vision for the school. When asked what changes teachers and administrators felt should be implemented in the distinguished educator program, many wrote about the need for more time to be spent by the distinguished educator in the school and less time spent outside the school at meetings and preparing paperwork. These comments appear to be an indirect indication of the success of the distinguished educator program. The distinguished educator is viewed by a large majority of teachers and administrators as a vital part of the transformation of a school "in decline." As one teacher stated, "Our distinguished educator is the most positive thing that KERA has produced."

Discussion

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that Kentucky's Distinguished Educators have successfully aided the implementation of change in School Transformation and Renewal (STAR) schools. Based on the survey results, several conclusions can be drawn that focus on how the distinguished educator program brought about effective school change. The data analysis revealed the following attributes of a successful school reform program which are supported by prior educational research: (a) a collaborative climate for change that fosters professional dialogue and interaction; (b) the articulation and implementation of goals in a clear and measurable manner; (c) strategies for balancing time in the facilitation of reform efforts; (d) a process for initiating and sustaining continuous transformation through empowerment. The following discussion is organized around these attributes.

A Collaborative Climate for Change That Fosters Professional Dialogue and Interaction

Historically, teachers have worked in isolation--in their individual classrooms--rarely having the opportunity to communicate with one another. As a result, teachers may feel powerless and unable to bring about change (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Schmoker, 1996). When mandated reforms are introduced, teachers can feel even more powerless (Astuto, 1994).

When reforms bring people together in a collaborative manner the outcomes tend to be positive (Schmoker, 1996). Researchers have concluded that along with a collaborative environment, educators must have the necessary information for change (Deal & Peterson, 1990; Thurston, Clift, & Schacht, 1993). They need to be armed with ways of gaining and applying new knowledge that leads to school improvement. A major goal of the distinguished educator program is to foster new ideas in a collaborative environment that leads to school improvement (McDonald, 1996a).

In order to facilitate collaboration at STAR schools, the distinguished educators are prepared to build a foundation for professional dialogue and interaction that focuses on issues related to student learning as well as overall school improvement. Evidence in this study supports the effectiveness of this type of dialogue between change agents (distinguished educators) and school personnel (STAR educators).

A related study (Newton, 1996) also indicates the advantages of collaboration. Newton identifies specific enabling activities and behaviors employed by the distinguished educators of Kentucky to build collaboration through the school transformation process. These activities and behaviors were designed to involve all personnel. They included: (a) opening lines of communication throughout the organization; (b) building trust and rapport among all staff members; (c) developing tools designed to facilitate meetings, negotiate

difficult issues, provide reflection, and foster evaluation.

Another critical component in this successful collaboration is the cooperation of the various groups of people involved in the process of change. People change systems, and successful reforms of schools are people-centered (Fullan, 1991). While valuing educators as individuals and respecting their independent work is important, it is not enough. Teamwork is essential. Many respondents referred to their feelings of being a part of a team effort that focused on successful school change.

Overwhelming educational research (e.g., Senge, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sergiovanni & Moore, 1989; Sizer, 1992) supports the importance of collaboration among school personnel and change agents. However, the most effective collaboration must be focused on shared responsibility for tasks that individuals cannot complete alone (Little, 1990). At the core of effective collaboration are people believing in what they are doing, recognizing its value and importance, and finding relevance and purpose in their work (Fullan, 1991).

Educational reform initiatives must foster the development of schools as communities of professionals. Brown (1994) contends that

> learning and teaching depend heavily upon creating, sustaining and expanding a community of research practice. Members of the community are critically dependent on each other . . . collaborative learning is not just necessary for survival. This interdependence promotes an atmosphere of joint responsibility, mutual respect, and a sense of personal and group identity (p. 10).

This study suggests that commitment to collaboration is important to the success of educational reforms. The respondents emphasized the significance and value of collaboration. Overall, the findings show that the distinguished educator is having an influence by keeping STAR school personnel focused and helping them to work together. The responses of the different groups surveyed reflected their belief that the distinguished educator was a team and morale builder.

The Articulation and Implementation of Goals in a Clear and Measurable Manner

Effective collaboration requires goals to be articulated and shared among those involved in the change process. One of the clearest ways to articulate and measure the implementation of goals has been for the distinguished educator to assist School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) school personnel in the development of the School Transformation Plan (STP). During the process, the distinguished educator works collaboratively with school personnel to assess school needs and--from the data gathered—establish measurable goals (McGown, 1995). A teacher who participated in McGown's study argued that, "We (the STAR school) have a stronger transformation plan and a more complete vision of what we must do and what we want to accomplish." The findings of this study are similar to McGown's. A majority of the respondents felt that the STP helped establish measurable goals.

In order to foster goal achievement, the distinguished educators and school personnel limited the number of goals in order to assure manageability. The principals' responses revealed that they were convinced the STP helped to establish measurable and manageable goals for the STAR schools. Peters (1987) argues that "They are succeeding because they set 'conservative' goals which have a near certainty of being met" (p. 513).

The component manager's (teacher) role is designed to coordinate in a measurable manner the resources needed to implement and achieve the goals. In short, the component manager's primary responsibility is to monitor the progress of goal attainment. The monitoring process provides the component managers with vital information about the effectiveness of the STP. The results show that the component managers were convinced that the STP helped establish measurable goals for the schools.

The development of shared goals is not enough for school improvement to occur. The implementation and achievement of the goals is dependent on monetary as well as human resources (Fullan, 1991). The survey results indicated that the superintendents appreciated the financial (Commonwealth School Improvement Funds) and practical support of the STAR program, which had allowed them to purchase or have access to much needed resources for the school and to provide professional training for the staff.

Setting measurable goals and having the resources to implement them has enabled the distinguished educators to facilitate change. Some component managers and principals, however, were less sure that the STP had improved teaching and learning. STAR school personnel may have in motion the processes needed to implement the STP, but they may not feel totally certain they are helping to affect student learning. They do not see the relationship between their planning efforts and increased student learning. This is not surprising, because teacher behaviors often change before their attitudes and beliefs (Fullan, 1985). Changing behaviors is a process that requires time. To thoughtfully initiate, implement and sustain effective school reform the process for changing behaviors must be allowed adequate time (Evans, 1996; Fullan, 1991).

Strategies for Balancing Time in the Facilitation of Reform Efforts

How those who are directly involved in the change process spend their time determines the progress of the change (Sergiovanni & Moore, 1989). The results indicated all respondent groups felt the time distinguished educators spent in the school working with School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) personnel was critical to the implementation of the School Transformation Plan (STP) and other reform initiatives.

The respondent groups expressed a desire to have additional time during which the distinguished educator was on site at STAR schools. It was also apparent that a majority of the distinguished educators wanted to have more

opportunities to interact with STAR personnel at the school site. One distinguished educator summed it up by stating, "Many days are spent outside the school location, at times most inconvenient to the school calendar . . . To folks in schools it looks like we are taking extended holidays and putting distinguished educator meetings ahead of school assistance." As previously stated, many of the principals' and superintendents' responses reflected the same theme.

The principals and superintendents also agreed that the component managers (teachers) spent too much time away from the classroom in meetings and training sessions. It was interesting that the component managers tended to see their time at training sessions as productive.

A related study (Williamson, Sinor, & Pettit, 1996) analyzed 22 distinguished educators' time sheets for a four-month period in the 1995-1996 school year. This led to the identification of seven categories of time expenditure: (a) travel (22 percent of time); (b) attending distinguished educator meetings (6 percent of time); (c) planning, writing reports, and communicating with others in order to complete tasks for the STAR schools (14 percent of time); (d) professional development (4 percent of time); (e) working at the assigned STAR school (34 percent of time); (f) STAR program development (18 percent of time); (g) meeting with STAR district administrators (3 percent of time). It is apparent that the distinguished educator's responsibilities extend beyond the confines of a traditional school schedule.

Distinguished educators perform activities outside of their schools that prepare them for their for their work within schools. The importance of spending time on these activities must be weighed against the desire of school personnel to have distinguished educators spend more time with them. Perhaps the best way to have the distinguished educators spend more time in their schools would be to have them work in only one school.

A Process for Initiating and Sustaining Continuous Transformation Through Empowerment

For meaningful change to occur, the results suggest it must be rooted in a workable set of measurable goals developed collaboratively by the change agent (distinguished educator) and school personnel (STAR educators). By creating a situation that places school personnel in a position of "ownership of the goals," they are more likely to see that the goals are attained. The school personnel should develop a sense of direct responsibility (Fullan, 1991; Louis & Miles, 1990; Maeroff, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sergiovanni & Moore, 1989).

Shulman (1989) defines this teacher empowerment as the development

> of mind, of spirit, of status, and of role. The teacher is enabled by a knowledge base--the knowledge and skill needed to be effective in teaching, by commitment--the passion, motivation, ethical norms necessary to persevere responsibly in the face of discouragement and difficulty, by the status of (being) a professional (p. 169).

The results suggest the success of school reforms may be directly related to the empowerment of school personnel. The School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) school educators felt they had more authority and control over what happened in their schools. In an empowering environment the initiation, implementation, and continuation of reform initiatives are more likely to succeed at improving student achievement and overall school climate (Fullan, 1991). The method of achieving this empowerment is to have school-wide involvement in the initial phase--the STAR transformation planning process, which the distinguished educator facilitates. Caution must be exercised to assure is a powerful progression from planning through implementation and continuation of school improvement (Schmoker, 1996). This underscores the importance of the role of the external change agent, the distinguished educator.

The results of this study illustrate the importance of the role of the external change agent (distinguished educator). For example, the data showed the distinguished educator has successfully introduced school personnel to new teaching practices. The results also indicated the distinguished educators saw the importance of modeling effective instructional practices and techniques.

Fullan (1991) supported the use of external change agents to insure thoughtful progression. He contended that external agents introduce school personnel to new pedagogy, assist in the training, help to ensure human and monetary resources are acquired, and help initiate, implement and continue

effective school change. Further external change agents provide teachers with the opportunity to acquire a firmer knowledge base and a better sense of where to go for information, which is important in giving teachers more control over their professional lives (Maeroff, 1988).

In addition to the instructional support, it was evident that the superintendents felt the distinguished educators provided guidance on how to acquire needed financial support. This guidance led to the purchase of useful materials as well as access to other valuable instructional resources.

Initiating, sustaining, and continuing transformation through the empowerment of those involved in the process is critical to effective school change (Fullan, 1991). The distinguished educators recognized that STAR school educators would need support mechanisms for continuing school reform efforts on their own. Therefore, they developed tools that the STAR school personnel could use to monitor progress, collect important data, and incorporate that data into the decision-making process.

The tools created by the distinguished educators offer a means of managing and sustaining effective school change. They can only be effective if those who use them do so in an empowering and knowledgeable manner. As Fullan (1991) argued

> Individuals must take responsibility for empowering themselves and others through becoming experts in the change process . . . Successful individuals will be highly

> involved with their environments, influencing and being influenced in this continuous exchange. The solution lies in critical masses of highly engaged individuals working on the creation of conditions for continuous renewal, while being shaped by these very conditions as the latter evolves (p. 353-354).

The results from the distinguished educator surveys accentuate the critical significance of on-site change that is motivated from within. Schools are the key elements of educational change. The district and the state must encourage individual schools to analyze their own problems and develop their own plans for the process of school change (Passow, 1989; Quimby, 1985). The rationale behind the development of the distinguished educator program was to create guidance and support for the school change process.

Conclusions

The Kentucky Distinguished Educator program, according to the survey respondents, is having a positive affect on school change in the Commonwealth. All four groups who responded to the survey consistently rated the distinguished educator program as highly effective to effective. The respondents' open-ended comments, for the most part, supported this rating.

It is also apparent that the distinguished educator program is serving as a catalyst for new educational practices in School Transformation Assistance and Renewal (STAR) schools. These practices--collaboration that leads to professional interaction, the articulation and implementation of measurable goals,

decision-making that involves all participants, and the empowerment of school personnel so that school transformation is an on-going process--are consistent with what educational researchers (Fraatz, 1987; Fullan, 1991; Schmoker, 1996) contend are the essential elements of effective school improvement.

The results of this study suggest two areas for improvement. All respondent groups believe the distinguished educator should spend more time in the schools. They also evaluated the distinguished educators' relationship with parents and community as less effective than their work in other areas. The distinguished educator's allocation of time, as well as the means by which they relate to parents and the community, needs to be reexamined to make them even more effective as agents of school change.

The distinguished educators of Kentucky are unique change agents. As "insiders," they gain credibility among personnel in STAR schools because they are a part of the Kentucky public school system. However, they also are "outsiders"--persons who have few preconceptions about the STAR schools they serve and have the ability to offer specialized training and expertise when it comes to solving school problems. In the future, educational researchers need to conduct in-depth investigations (e.g., case studies) that examine the unique role of the distinguished educator as an "outsider" and "insider." Another area of investigation should include an examination of STAR schools after distinguished educators have concluded their work.

The Kentucky Distinguished Educator program is an important part of the implementation of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), an aggressive and innovative initiative that many see as a way to make Kentucky's educational system a model for others to follow. The distinguished educators are viewed by those with whom they work as educational professionals, "morale builders," and as "committed," "courageous," and "knowledgeable" individuals. These distinguished educators were enabled by KERA and in turn they have empowered others to enact reform.

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Appendix A

Sample Survey

Appendix A
Sample Survey

TO: STAR School Component Managers

FROM: Dr. Bert Lyons, University of Louisville

DATE: December 9, 1995

SUBJECT: DE Surveys

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The enclosed survey was developed for the Kentucky Department of Education to assist ongoing discussion of the Distinguished Educator initiative. Please read the introductory letter from the Department of Education. I would like to add some more specific information about the purpose and design of this survey. Information compiled from this survey and similar surveys that are being sent to other educators involved with STAR schools, will be used to prepare a final public report. This information may also be used to establish a research data base.

It is standard research practice to attempt to keep confidential all information gathered in a survey. The surveys you complete will be examined by myself and another independent researcher Dr. Mimi Davis at Owensboro Community College. Before any of this data is turned over to the Department of Education we will remove any information that we believe clearly identifies the respondent.

With this in mind, I have observed that the dialogue about the Distinguished Educator initiative has tended to be very open. I hope you will feel free to answer these questions frankly, and use your responses as a catalyst for further discussion. Associate Commissioner Robert W. Lumsden has emphasized that the Department of Education wants to get a complete picture of the strengths and possible weaknesses in the STAR Program.

I realize that all of you are very busy with working to help your schools, but I hope you will find time to promptly respond to this survey. Dr. Davis and myself have enjoyed volunteering our time to learn more about the Distinguished Educator initiative and I look forward to working with you. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (502)-845-2785 or contact the Department of Education.

THANK-YOU!

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE 12/95

SECTION ONE: BASIC DATA

1. What is your name?_____

2. What is the name of your school?_____

3. What is your gender? (circle) M F

4. In your career as an educator how many years have you been a teacher? _____

5. Some of you are currently working with more than one DE at your school. Please list the names of all the DE's with whom you are currently working. If you are only working with one DE write their name and go on to question 7.

_____

_____

_____

6. Many of the questions in this survey assume that you will respond on the basis of your working experiences with one particular DE who is currently at your school. For the purpose of this study base your answers upon your experiences with the DE with whom you have spent the most time. Name this DE below.

_____

7. What is your date of birth? _____

Note: The print size on this survey has been changed to facilitate space.

DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR QUESTIONNAIRE 12/95

SECTION TWO

1. This section begins with questions that ask you to evaluate the effectiveness of activities in which you and the DE assigned to your school may have been involved. A space is provided to mark "Not Relevant" in the event that the question asks about an activity in which you have not engaged. Read each question and circle the number of the response from "Highly Effective" to "Negative Effect" that best summarizes your viewpoint.

   A. How effective has the DE's work with school staff members been in the development of the STP?

      1. Highly Effective
      2. Effective
      3. Somewhat Effective
      4. Neutral Effect
      5. Negative Effect
      6. Not Relevant

   B. How effective has the STP been in establishing measurable goals?

      1. Highly Effective
      2. Effective
      3. Somewhat Effective
      4. Neutral Effect
      5. Negative Effect
      6. Not Relevant

   C. How effective has the STP been in improving teaching and learning?

      1. Highly Effective
      2. Effective
      3. Somewhat Effective
      4. Neutral Effect
      5. Negative Effect
      6. Not Relevant

   D. How effective have the KIRIS results been as a tool in developing school improvement strategies?

      1. Highly Effective
      2. Effective
      3. Somewhat Effective
      4. Neutral Effect
      5. Negative Effect
      6. Not Relevant

   E. How effective has information from the Effective Schools Survey been in developing school improvement strategies?

      1. Highly Effective
      2. Effective
      3. Somewhat Effective
      4. Neutral Effect
      5. Negative Effect
      6. Not Relevant

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

F. How effective was the use of KERA strand analysis in the development of the STP?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

G. How effective has the DE been in encouraging your role as component manager?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

H. How effective has the DE been in encouraging the principal in his leadership role?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

I. How effective has the DE been in getting cooperation from the school district in creating a support plan?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

J. How effective has the DE been in getting cooperation from the school staff in developing Vital Signs Reports?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

K. How effective have the Vital Signs Reports been in monitoring initial implementation of the STP?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

L. How effective have the activities in the STP been in involving parents and the community?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

M. How effective has the DE been in facilitating the implementation of the STP?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

N. How effective have the opportunities and resources pledged to the STAR school in the District Support Plan been?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

O. How effective do you feel the DE has been in engaging parents in your school's educational efforts?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

P. How effective do you feel the DE has been in engaging the community in your school's educational efforts?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

2. How would you rate the DE's reception during their first few weeks by the following groups in your school? Please circle the number of your response. End by evaluating your own response to the DE.

A. Principal

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

B. Students

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

C. Teachers

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

D. District Personnel

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

E. SBDM

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor
6. Unavailable

F. Component Manager

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor
6. Unavailable

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

3. Currently, how would you describe the involvement and cooperation with the DE of the following groups, including yourself. Please circle the number of your response.

A. Principal

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

B. Students

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

C. Teachers

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

D. Component Manager

1. Excellent
2. Very Good
3. Good
4. Fair
5. Poor

4. The following questions ask about the STAR Professional Development Network.

a. How many STAR component teams have been established at your school?

_____

b. How effective has the DE been in working with your team?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

c. How effective have monthly component manager meetings been in bringing new ideas into the school?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

d. How effective do you feel the DE has been in fostering a favorable attitude in the school staff towards STAR projects?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

e. How effective do you feel the DE has been in fostering a favorable attitude in parents towards STAR projects?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

5. How effective has the money your school has received in Commonwealth School Improvement Funds been in improving school performance?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

6. How effective has the DE been in communicating his/her roles and responsibilities?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

7. Overall, how effective has the work of the DE been in your school?

1. Highly Effective
2. Effective
3. Somewhat Effective
4. Neutral Effect
5. Negative Effect
6. Not Relevant

PLEASE CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

****The remaining questions require written responses. If the answers you wish to give require more space than provided, use the back of the page. Be sure to indicate the number of the question to which you are responding. If a question is not relevant, briefly indicate why this is so and go on to the next question.*

8. What are the most important changes in curriculum that have been initiated by you and the DE?

   a. _____

   _____

   _____

   b. _____

   _____

   _____

9. Apart from curricular changes, what do you feel has been the most important change initiated by you and the DE?

10. When working with school staff DE's use a variety of techniques such as modeling, coaching, advice, counseling, encouraging discussion, empowering, providing information, etc. Name two techniques that you have observed that you feel have been especially successful in the project for which you have been component manager.

    a. TECHNIQUE : _____

    EXAMPLE :_____

    _____

    b. TECHNIQUE :_____

    EXAMPLE : _____

    _____

11. What aspect of the distinguished educator's work have you found most valuable for your school?

12. Describe one aspect of the role of a distinguished educator that you would most like to see changed.

THANK-YOU FOR HELPING US WITH THIS PROJECT!!!

Appendix B

Percentages of Component Managers' Perceptions

Appendix B

Percentages of Component Managers' Perceptions

The following table illustrates the three categories into which the quantitative data were divided. Those categories are: (1) distinguished educators, (2) tools, and (3) community.

Distinguished Educators	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
DE works with staff on STP	53	33	--	--	--	15
DE encourages component manager	59	18	13	--	5	5
DE encourages principal leadership	53	33	3	5	3	5
DE gets cooperation from school district	35	35	18	8	3	3
DE gets cooperation from staff for Vital Signs	45	35	13	3	5	--
DE has facilitated STP implementation	55	38	5	--	3	--
DE works well with STAR teams	63	25	10	--	3	--
DE fosters good STAR staff attitude	40	33	20	5	3	--
DE communicates role	65	25	5	3	3	--
Overall DE	65	22	10	--	1	--

Tools	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP helps establish measurable goals	45	38	15	3	--	--
STP improves teaching and learning	20	53	23	5	--	--
KIRIS results used in developing strategies	23	47	25	3	--	3
Effective Schools survey	13	40	28	15	--	5
KERA strand analysis and STP development	21	41	23	5	--	10
Vital Signs Report	28	50	13	8	--	3
Resources from District Support Plan	38	40	13	3	5	3
Component Manager meetings	20	43	23	10	3	3
CSIF improves school	56	33	10	--	--	--

Community	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP involves parents and community	20	30	40	10	--	--
DE engages parents	18	43	23	15	--	3
DE engages community	10	45	25	18	--	3
DE fosters good STAR parent attitude	23	28	25	23	--	3

Note. HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; NE = Not Effective; NEG = Negative Affect; NR = Not Related.

Appendix C

Percentages of Principals' Perceptions

Appendix C

Percentage of Principals' Perceptions

The following table illustrates the three categories into which the quantitative data were divided. Those categories are: (1) distinguished educators, (2) tools, and (3) community.

Distinguished Educators	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
DE work with staff on STP	55	35	7	--	--	3
DE encourages principal leadership	45	28	17	7	--	--
DE gets cooperation from school district	31	35	21	10	--	3
DE gets cooperation from staff for Vital Signs	55	38	3	--	--	3
DE has facilitated STP implementation	52	38	7	3	--	--
DE fosters good STAR staff attitude	35	41	17	--	--	7
DE communicates role	52	35	14	--	--	--
Overall DE	55	28	14	3	--	--

Tools	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP helps establish measurable goals	45	45	10	--	--	--
STP improves teaching and learning	17	48	31	3	--	--
KIRIS results used in developing strategies	24	38	28	3	3	--
Effective Schools survey	17	41	31	7	3	--
KERA strand analysis/STP development	17	28	45	3	--	7
Vital Signs Report	45	38	14	--	--	3
Resources from District Support Plan	31	66	--	3	--	--
Component Manager meetings	10	45	24	7	7	7
CSIF improves school	41	41	14	--	--	3

Community	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP involves parents and community	7	35	45	14	--	--
DE engages parents	10	35	35	21	--	--
DE engages community	10	24	38	24	--	3
DE fosters good STAR parent attitude	35	41	17	--	--	7

Note. HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; NE = Not Effective; NEG = Negative Affect; NR = Not Related.

Appendix D

Percentages of Distinguished Educators' Perceptions

Appendix D

Percentages of Distinguished Educators' Perceptions

The following table illustrates the three categories into which the quantitative data were divided. Those categories are: (1) distinguished educators, (2) tools, and (3) community.

Distinguished Educators	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
DE work with staff on STP	24	24	4	--	--	48
DE encourages principal leadership	15	48	30	2	4	--
DE gets cooperation from school district	15	33	33	15	--	4
DE gets cooperation from staff for Vital Signs	44	31	20	2	--	2
DE has facilitated STP implementation	20	53	27	--	--	--
DE fosters good STAR staff attitude	11	54	33	6	--	2

Tools	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP helps establish measurable goals	24	61	15	--	--	--
STP improves teaching and learning	11	44	46	--	--	--
KIRIS results used in developing strategies	37	41	22	--	--	--
Effective Schools survey	11	41	33	9	--	7
KERA strand analysis and STP development	13	28	28	7	2	22
Vital Signs Report	33	52	9	4	--	2
Resources from District Support Plan	20	33	39	9	--	--
Component Manager meetings	9	44	35	7	4	2
CSIF improves school	30	46	15	4	--	2

Community	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
STP involves parents and community	11	20	58	11	--	--
DE engages parents and community	7	24	51	16	2	--

Note. HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; NE = Not Effective; NEG = Negative Affect; NR = Not Related.

Appendix E

Percentages of Superintendents' Perceptions

Appendix E

Percentages of Superintendents' Perceptions

The following table illustrates the results of the quantitative data analysis.

Distinguished Educators	HE	E	SE	NE	NEG	NR
Assistance provided by STAR in schools	21	54	25	--	--	--
Overall DE	36	50	11	--	--	4
Helping staff improve student performance	11	43	39	--	--	7
Helping staff focus on improving curriculum and instruction	32	46	18	3	--	--
Communicated with superintendent about the STAR project	36	43	14	7	--	--
Assisting with the development of the District Support Plan	36	7	7	14	--	--

Note. HE = Highly Effective; E = Effective; SE = Somewhat Effective; NE = Not Effective; NEG = Negative Affect; NR = Not Related.